MEDIEVAL SPAWN / WITCHBLADE

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WHAT DO YOU MEAN, *WE'RE LOSING?*

I-I AM SORRY, MY LORD--!

THE KNIGHT AND THE WARRIOR-WOMAN ARE MAKING MINCEMEAT OF US! A HUNDRED SOLDIERS OF DARKNESS HAVE FALLEN TO THEIR BLADES--AND STILL THEY DO NOT TIRE!

I BEG OF YOU, MY LORD! *LET US RETREAT!*

NEVER!

KRAKK!

LORD CARDINALE--

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU: THAT WORM, ROYALE, DIDN'T GIVE US THE FULL STORY.

THAT *WITCHBLADE* THE WOMAN WIELDS COULD BE THE EQUAL OF YOUR *DARKNESS POWER,* AND WITH THE *SPAWN* AT HER SIDE WE MAY'VE MET OUR MATCH. PERHAPS RETREAT--

SILENCE, ELINOR! I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT!

I *CANNOT* BELIEVE THAT MY ARMY HAS BEEN HALTED INSIDE THE WALLS OF BEL-GADRYEL! NOT *NOW,* ON THE BRINK OF OUR GREATEST TRIUMPH!

AND NOT BY TWO BLOODY LITTLE MORTALS!

IT'S GOT TO BE HERE SOMEWHERE...

WHAT HAS?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE NEUTRALIZING ALL THIS MAGIC GEAR, ROYALE. IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY NEUTRALIZED TO ME.

YOU ARE AN IRRELEVANCE. LEAVE NOW AND YOU'LL STAY ALIVE.

BUT THEN, IT MAKES NO ODDS TO ME IF YOU LIVE OR DIE. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY MAKE ANY IMPACT ON MY PLANS AT THIS POINT, ANYWAY.

I KNEW YOU WERE FULL OF IT THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU, YOU WANKER! COME ON, WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

ANYTHING I BLOODY WELL WANT...

OH AYE?

SHOKK!

ξσηφκυωψτΨ

NOW WAIT A MINUTE--

WAAAAAGGH!

AW, NO--

AAIIEEEE!!

STALKER--?

WHUHH!

OHMYGOD NOPLEASEHELP MEEEEEEE!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU--

IT'S ROYALE! HE'S UP THERE! I DUNNO WHAT HE'S DOING, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THE BASTARD'S ON OUR SIDE!

TOO LATE, INSECT. NOBODY'S STOPPING ME NOW.

I'VE FOUND IT.

NOW: THE APOCALYPSE. WHEN WILL IT COME?

WHEN?

OCTOBE

AND...AND HOW CAN I LIVE TO SEE IT? HOW SHALL I STILL BE LIVING, EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW...?

R 2, 1996 A.D.

OH YES.

BRAND BATT

TELL ME?

MY LORD, WE HAVE BARELY THIRTY WARRIORS LEFT! WE *MUST* RETREAT!

DAMMIT--!

BACK, YOU DOGS! RETREAT!

AT LAST! WE'RE FREE TO TAKE ROYALE!

YOU *CAN'T* LEAVE YET, CARDINALE. I HAVE PLANS FOR YOU, AND WITH WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE WITCHBLADE, PERHAPS I CAN GIVE YOU REASON TO STAY...

ΗΔΘΣΙΕΩΟΑΠ

AAAAAHHH!

KATARINA?!

KATARINA, *WHAT'S WRONG?*

MAOOW! IT'S--I CAN'T--

I CAN'T CONTROL IT--

RRAAARGGHH!

KATARINA, YOU CAN'T—

NO! WITCHBLADE!

I AM WITCHBLADE!

AAH-!

AAAGHH!

ABOUT TIME WE GOT A BREAK...!

GO ON, YOU FOOLS! BUTCHER EACH OTHER!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

I DO! I, WITCHBLADE!

AAAAHH!

KATARINA, NO! LISTEN TO ME! THERE IS MUCH I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU!

I KNEW YOU--BEFORE I WAS LIKE THIS! WHEN I WAS JUST A MAN! WE MET SEVEN YEARS AGO--IN FAR SARDINIA

WE WERE LOVERS!!

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WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
SOMETHING BOOSTED THE POWER OF THE WITCHBLADE, INCREASED IT'S WILL ENOUGH FOR IT TO CONTROL ME.
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
KATARINA, I...ER...
LATER, WE'VE GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS.
AYE! LET'S HAVE AN END TO THIS, YOU SCUM!
LORD CARDINALE, REMEMBER MY COUNSEL! THE WITCHBLADE MAY YET BE OUR UNDOING!
A POX ON THE B..ODY WITCHB..ADE! BOTH OF YOU--GET READY TO DIE!
YOU SHOULD PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE FINAL JOURNEY, CARDINALE...
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, SIR KNIGHT...
WITCHBLADE OR NO, WOMAN, YOU HAVE MADE YOUR LAST MISTAKE--
CUT THE CRAP AND LET'S GET TO IT!

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RAAAARRGGH!

HNNNGGHH!

YAAAH—!

I AM *FROM* THE DARKNESS! NO *MORTAL BITCH* CAN KILL ELINOR.

GET THAT STITCHED!

HNNHH!

GUHH—!

AAH! CARDINAL! HELP ME!

YOU HELP MEEEIIIGHH!

ENOUGH.

I CALL ON THE DARKNESS! AID ME NOW!

GIVE ME EVERY OUNCE OF POWER!

GOOD CHRIST--!

NO!!

CARDINAL! IF YOU CALL ALL THE DARKNESS TO YOURSELF, YOU DESTROY YOUR ARMY! YOU DESTROY ME!

DO NOT UN-MAKE ME! DON'T SEND ME BACK TO DARKEST NOTHING! PLEASE!

ELINOR? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

ROYALE? HOW--?

ONE OF MY MANY TALENTS.

ETERNAL IMPRISONMENT, ELINOR.

I COULD SAVE YOU, ELINOR. I HAVE POWER ENOUGH.

THEN DO IT! I BEG YOU!

REMEMBER WHEN I WAS AT YOUR MERCY? REMEMBER WHEN YOU MADE ME BEG?

FEEL FREE TO ROT.

YOU TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON, ELINOR. ROYALE WILL NEVER BEG AGAIN. I WILL BE AT NO-ONE'S MERCY, NOT AS LONG AS I LIVE...

FOR TEACHING ME THAT LESSON, I OFFER YOU A REWARD.

NOOOOO!!

AAAACCHH!

GAHH--! STINKING VILENESS! RELEASE ME!

NOW, SPAWN-- OR WHATEVER YOU ARE! NOW WE'LL SEE WHO WALKS THE ROAD TO DEATH!

I'LL PULL YOUR GODDAMNED GUTS OUT!

AND THE WITCHBLADE-- THE SECRET OF MY DARKNESS, IS IT? PAH!!

IS IT HELL!!

HNK--

YOU HEAR THAT, YOU-- OVERGROWN TOOTHPICK--?

A LOT OF USE YOU TURNED OUT...TO BE...

YEEESSSS!

NO!

I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS! THE WITCHBLADE *CANNOT* BE STRONGER! *THE DARKNESS IS SUPREME!*

IT'S NOT THE *WEAPON*, CARDINALE.

IT'S THE *WIELDER.*

YOU *WIMP!*

AAAAAAHH!

YOU-- BLOODY LITTLE-- WHORE-

SHUT YOUR FILTHY MOUTH!

SMACK!

HHHH!

I CAN'T FIND ROYALE ANYWHERE...

NOR I. A PITY, TOO. I'LL WARRANT THE WRETCH HAS SOME GREAT EVIL PLANNED.

GOD, THIS SLAUGHTER IS TERRIBLE. BEL-GADRYEL WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.

STILL, ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, EH?

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE?

TREASURE, MATE. A FORTUNE IN ELVISH GOLD, TO BE PRECISE.

YOU WOULD LOOT THESE FAERIE FOLK OF THEIR RICHES?

WELL, WHAT ARE *THEY* GONNA DO WITH IT? THEY'RE *DEAD!*

THIS IS THE ONLY REASON KATARINA AND I CAME ALONG ON THIS RIDICULOUS BLOODY JAUNT IN THE FIRST PLACE...

I THINK I GOT MORE OUT OF IT THAN JUST THE GOLD, STALKER.

BUT COME ON, LET'S GO HOME. I FANCY A PINT OR TWO...

AND THEN *YOU'VE* GOT SOME EXPLAINING TO DO.

THIS IS NOT QUITE HOW I ENVISAGED GETTING MY HANDS ON YOUR POWER, CARDINALE.

BUT EVEN LIKE THIS...

1996!

IN FACT, THE WHOLE THING TURNED OUT PERFECTLY.

I DISCOVERED THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE, AND NOW I'VE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO SEE IT HAPPEN...

AS HAVE YOU, CARDINALE

LUCKY OLD YOU.

YOUUU... BAAASTARRD...

EVEN NOW YOU HOLD THE DARKNESS POWER. AND EVEN NOW, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, I DRAW A LITTLE OF THAT POWER INTO MYSELF--AND THUS AM RENDERED AS GOOD AS IMMORTAL.

WHEN THE APOCALYPSE BREAKS IN SIX MONTHS TIME, CARDINALE!

WE'LL BOTH BE THERE TO SEE IT.

AND YOU... YOU NEVER GET TIRED OF TELLING THE STORY, DO YOU, YOU UNSPEAKABLE LITTLE WRETCH...?

WHY SHOULD I?

ONE THING YOU NEVER TOLD ME...

WHAT HAPPENED... TO THEM.. AFTERWARDS? THE SPAWN... AND THE WITCHBLADE?

THEM? THEY'VE BEEN IN THE GROUND FOR EIGHT CENTURIES. WHAT DO YOU CARE WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

I NEED.. TO KNOW...

VERY WELL.

IT SEEMS LIKE A LONG TIME AGO...

"I MET YOU IN A TAVERN BY THE WATERFRONT, KATARINA. I HAD NEVER MET A LADY ...QUITE LIKE YOU BEFORE...

IT WAS A PERFECT SUMMER NIGHT, AND THE LOCAL CHIANTI HAD DROWNED MY INHIBITIONS. WE STROLLED ALONG A COUNTRY LANE UNTIL WE FOUND A HAYFIELD-- AND THEN, UNDER THE STARS, DRUNK ON WINE AND THE SCENT OF BLOOMING POPPIES...

"I WAS...NOT AS I AM NOW. I WAS TRAVELLING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND THE SHIP HAD PUT IN AT SARDINIA FOR PROVISIONING.

"WE MADE LOVE."

WA-HA-HEY! KATARINA, YOU DIRTY COW!

OH GOD, I REMEMBER NOW...!

AND NOW, BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE, YOU HAVE TRIUMPHED OVER THE WITCHBLADE...

NOW WAIT A MINUTE--!

OKAY, REMEMBERING YOU CERTAINLY DISTRACTED ME--BUT I MASTERED THE WITCHBLADE *MYSELF*, OKAY? THIS WASN'T ABOUT YOU AND ME, IT WAS ALL ABOUT *ME*...

OH, I HAD THOUGHT WE MIGHT...

NO THANKS.

YOU'RE TAKING IT ALL TOO SERIOUSLY. I MEAN, WE HAD FUN THAT NIGHT, BUT IT WAS JUST A ONE-OFF, YOU KNOW?

AND WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT EARLIER? WHY ALL THE MYSTERY?

I AM... NOT THE MAN I WAS THEN...

HOW D'YOU MEAN?

...OH... PERHAPS IT'S NOT IMPORTANT AFTER ALL.

SAD BASTARD.

HUH.

HEH...HEH.. HEH...

HEARTBROKEN, WAS HE? I...LIKE THAT

IN THAT CASE, YOU OUGHT TO LOVE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

WHAT'S EATING YOU?

OH, NOTHING.

IT'S JUST I CAN'T HELP NOTICE THAT YOU WON'T LET *ME* ANYWHERE NEAR YOU--BUT ALL BUCKETHEAD HAD TO DO WAS GET YOU DRUNK, AND IT WAS *HIS LUCKY BLOODY NIGHT!*

GOD ALMIGHTY, STALKER. OKAY, YOU'RE NO OIL PAINTING, BUT...

I TELL YOU WHAT: LET'S GO COUNT UP THAT ELF TREASURE AND FIND OUT JUST HOW RICH WE ARE-- AND THEN YOU CAN BUY ME A DRINK, OKAY?

WELL OBVIOUSLY HE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THAT WHEN WE WERE...!

OH MY GOD..!

SHE SAID I WAS GOOD LOOKING! SHE WANTS ME TO BUY HER A DRINK! SHE MUST *REALLY FANCY ME!*

I'M *ON* FOR A *DEFINITE SHAG!*

OKEY-DOKEY, PARTY TIME! HOW MUCH DO WE GOT?
OH, ABOUT TEN OR TWENTY THOUSAND...
PIECES OF LEAD.
OH NO! OH BLOODY HELL! IT WAS FAERIE GOLD--ON OUR WORLD IT'S TURNED COMPLETELY WORTHLESS!
I SEE.
SO WE GO ALL THAT WAY, TAKE ALL THOSE RISKS, NEARLY GET KILLED HALF A A DOZEN TIMES--ALL ON YOUR RECOMMENDATION, AND ALL FOR BLOODY NOTHING...
STALKER?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO WITH THIS?
THE END.

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